

REMARKS

Please enter the amendment filed on October 23, 2009 prior to entering the above amendments. In view of the foregoing amendments and following representations, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

By the above amendments, claims 1-7 are cancelled; claim 8 is amended; and claims 9-12 are newly presented. Thus, claims 8-12 are currently pending in the present application.

As indicated in the previous amendment (filed October 23, 2009), the Examiner agreed that claim 8 requires two adjacent brush elements connected at their ends to form a U-shape tip portion. The Examiner agreed that claim 8 distinguishes over the applied Yuyama reference.

Yuyama (U.S. Patent No. 5,803,309) discloses a partitioning member 14 comprising a partitioning portion 15 formed from a plurality of elastic bristles 17 that are tilted in a downstream direction and project in a comb-like shape. However, the brush elements disclosed in the Yuyama reference are linear members none of which are connected at their ends to form a rounded tip portion. Clearly, the Yuyama partitioning member does not disclose nor suggest two adjacent elements connected so as to have a U-shape providing a rounded tip portion. Since the Yuyama reference does not meet each and every limitation of claim 8, this reference cannot anticipate claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

Claims 9-12 depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 8, and are therefore allowable at least by virtue of their dependencies.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the present application is now clearly in condition for allowance. The Examiner therefore is requested to enter the above amendment and pass this case to issue.

In the event that the Examiner has any comments or suggestions of a nature necessary to place this case in condition for allowance, then the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney by telephone to promptly resolve any remaining matters.

Respectfully submitted,

Tasuku MINAMI et al.

/Michael S. Huppert/

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Michael S. Huppert
Registration No. 40,268
Attorney for Applicants

MSH/kjf
Washington, D.C. 20005-1503
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
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